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spitler woods

STATE PARK

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THE PARK

Spitler Woods State Park is a 202 acre wooded area just 8 miles southeast of Decatur and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east of Mt. Zion, off Illinois 121. The park was named for Mrs. Ida B. Spitler, who donated the land to the state in 1937, for the purpose of preserving for posterity this area of shaded ravines and towering trees.

HISTORY

Within Spitler Woods is a natural area containing one of the few remaining stands of virgin timber in Illinois. Large areas of east central Illinois were once forested. When the land was surveyed in April 1821, it was described as gently rolling woods composed mainly of oak, hickory, walnut and maple trees.

Sassafras was also abundant here and was used as a herb drink by pioneers. For many years following, the dried root bark was used to make hot sassafras tea, which was drunk in the spring, supposedly to clear up the body blood left sluggish from the long winter months. It is still used as a diaphoretic and a flavoring agent.

Mrs. Spitler had a deep love for nature. During her lifetime, she had taken great pains to see that no timber was cut on the land, nor did she allow the land to be hunted. Consequently, the woods retained many varieties of trees and shrubs native to central Illinois and became an important haven for birds and animals.

During the development of the park in 1939, two large depressions were found by W.P.A. workers. It is believed that they were caused by the back scratching and rolling antics of the once abundant bison that roamed this area.

General Terrain: More than one hundred and fifty years after the area was first surveyed, the sturdy oak, walnut, and maple trees still provide a soft dense canopy for the many varieties of birds found in the park. As one strolls through this peaceful natural area, he is likely to catch a glimpse of deer, rabbit, squirrel, opossum, raccoon, deer or field mice.

The undercover of plants include a wide variety of wildflowers. Among the most prominent are the dogtooth violet, jack-in-the-pulpit, dutchman's breeches, wild geranium, buttercup, may-apple, red trillium, black-eyed Susan, woodland sunflower, solomon's seal bluebells and anemone.



FACILITIES

Picnicking: Two picnic areas are in shaded areas convenient to parking areas. Picnic tables and camp stoves are provided. No cooking may be done except on park or camp stoves. There are three drinking fountains. Both flush and pit toilets are available for park visitors.

Trails: Five trails lead through approximately 5 miles of the park. The nature lover or bird watcher will find plenty to attract their attention.

Baseball Diamond: A large open grassy field has a baseball diamond for the more active visitor. A small playground is also in this area.

Shelter House: A large enclosed shelter building with a corner fireplace is used as a recreational building and may be scheduled for special events, family reunions or meetings, by reservation with the park ranger. Wood is not furnished.

Group Camping: Public camping is prohibited in the park. An area is reserved for youth group camping; groups of over 25 persons must have advance permission to enter the park. All campers need a permit from the park staff.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . .

Admittance will not be granted groups of 25 or more persons to any state park or conservation area unless permission from the park ranger has been secured to use the facilities. It is also required that groups of minors have adequate supervision and that at least one responsible adult accompany each group not exceeding 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous state parks and memorials are within easy access of every part of the state. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, White Pines Forest and Giant City. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

All state parks are open the year round. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of park roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to park facilities is by foot only.

For more details contact Park Ranger, Rural Route #1, Box 126, Mt. Zion, Illinois 62549, phone 217/864-3121. For information on other Illinois sites, write the Department of Conservation, Information/Education Section, State Office Building, Springfield, 62706.

← Decatur 8 Miles

Youth Group
Camping Area

Enclosed Pavilion

Picnic Area

Playground

Shelter

Picnic Area

Picnic Area

Ranger's
Office

Picnic Area

Picnic Area

Ranger's Res.

Ball Diamond

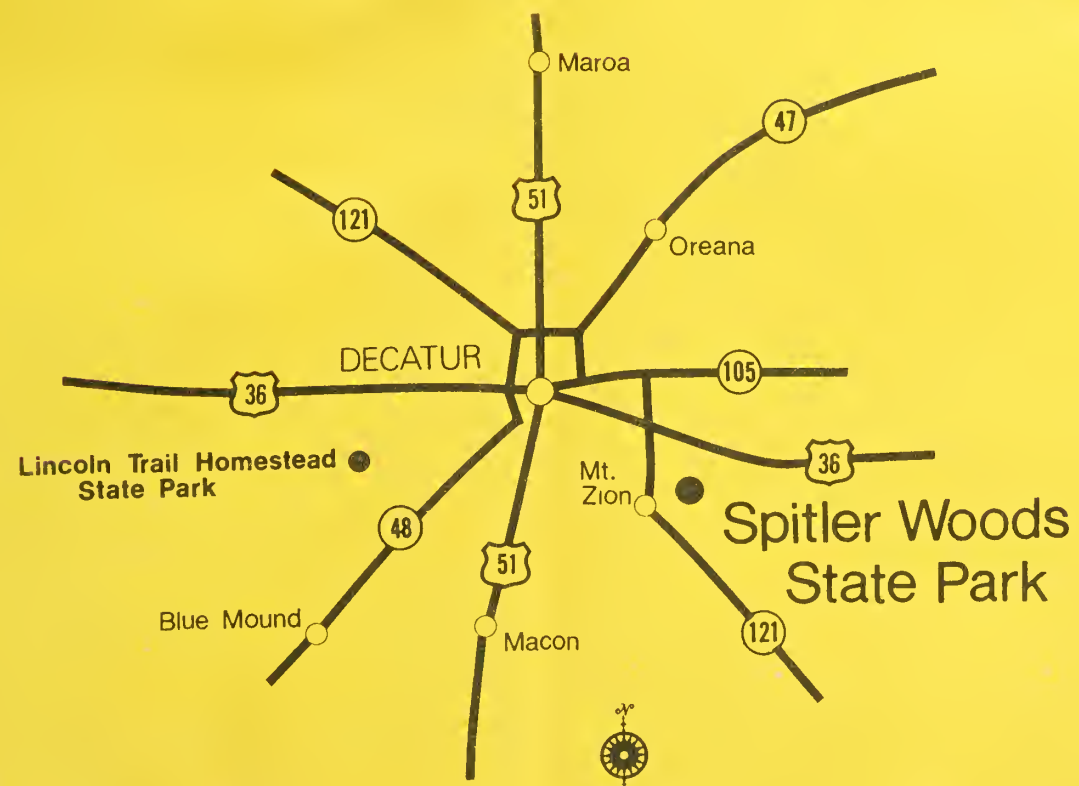
Parking

Nature Trail

Nature Trail

Nature Trail

Nature Trail



Park Maps